

LANGUAGE ACCESS IN HAWAII

Serafin Colmenares Jr.

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I. Introduction

Presentation will focus on:

- Demographic profile of Hawaii's LEP population
- What Hawaii has done to address the issue of language access

II. Hawaii's LEP Population

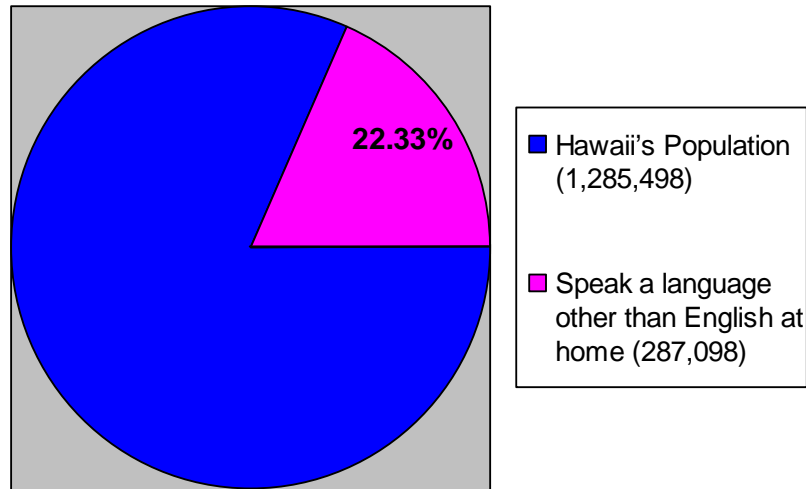
- Data taken from the 2006 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)
- LEP (limited English proficient) = ability to speak English is “not well” and “not at all.”
- Note: Hawaii's official languages are English and Hawaiian.

A. Population Characteristics

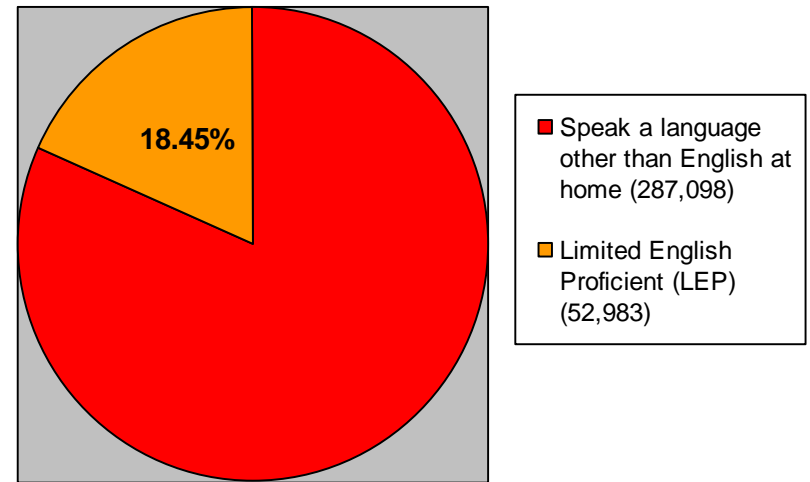
- Out of Hawaii's total population of 1.3 million, about 287,000 or 22.3% speak a language other than English at home.
- Of those who speak a language other than English at home, 52,983 or 18.5% are limited English proficient (LEP).
- About 84% of the LEP population live on Oahu.

Hawaii's Limited English Proficient (LEP) Population Demographic Profile

Hawaii's Population Characteristics



Percentage of Hawaii Residents Who Speak a Language Other Than English at Home and are Limited English Proficient (LEP)

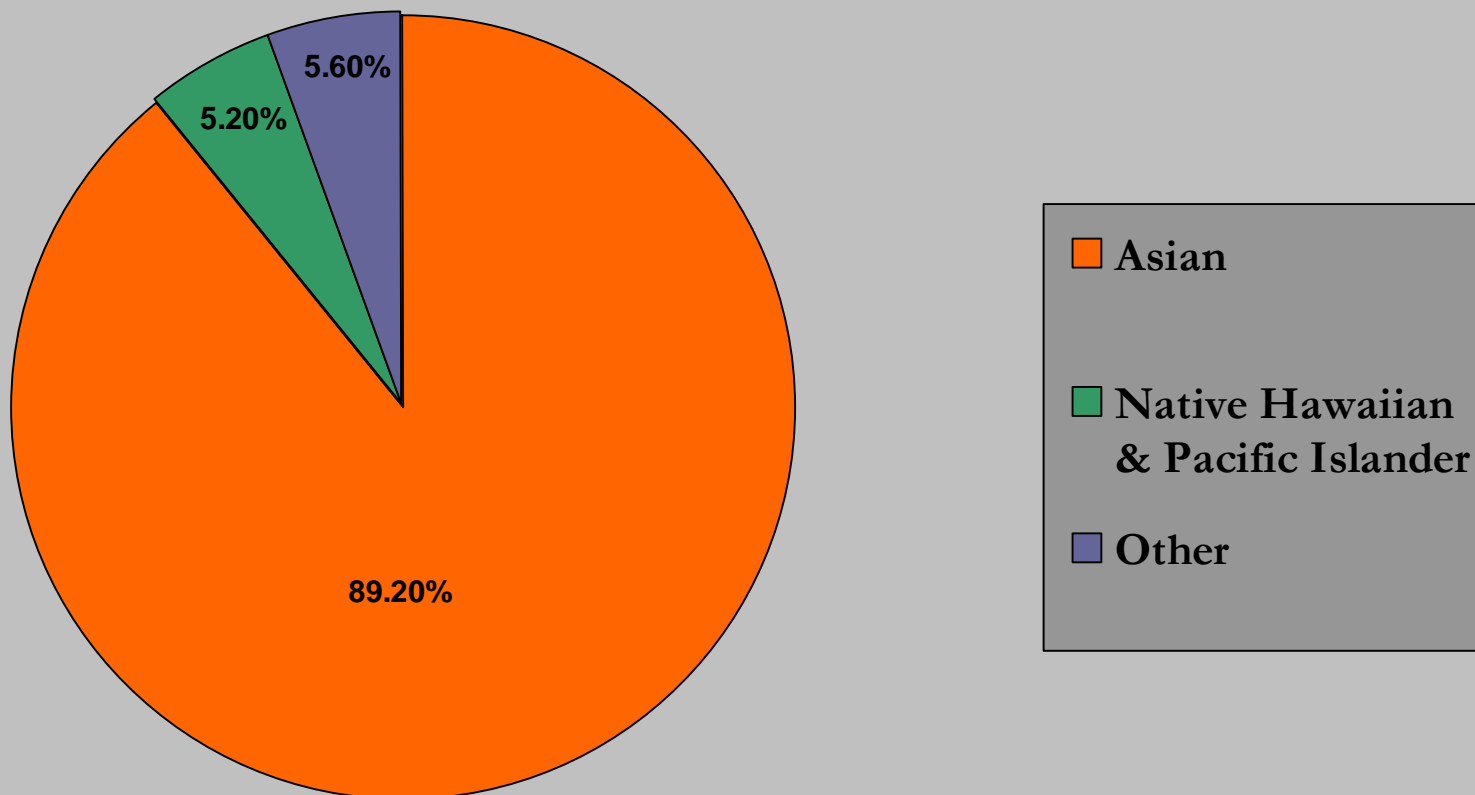


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)

Population Characteristics

- Among the LEP population, 47,248 or 89.2% are Asians.
- Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders constitute an additional 5.2% of the LEP population.
- Among Asians, the largest LEP groups are the Filipinos, Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, and Vietnamese.

Ethnicity of Hawaii's Limited English Proficient (LEP) Population



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)

Top Languages Spoken by Hawaii's LEP Population

1. Ilokano
2. Japanese
3. Tagalog
4. Chinese
5. Korean
6. Vietnamese
7. Bisayan (Cebuano)
8. Cantonese
9. Other Pacific Languages (Chuukese, Marshallese, Yapese)
10. Spanish

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)

Population Characteristics

- Age – 23,530 or almost 45% are aged 60 years and above. (Almost 75% of the LEP population are aged 40 years and above.)
- Gender – about 58% of the LEP population is female.

B. Socio-Economic Characteristics

- Among Hawaii's LEP population, 25,983 or 49% have less than high school education; about 40,915 or 77.2% did not go beyond high school.
- Among the LEP population, 21,648 or almost 41% have total incomes of less than \$10,000 per year; about 53.4% have annual incomes of less than \$15,000; about 73.4% have incomes of less than \$25,000 annually.

Hawaii's Limited English Proficient (LEP) Population Demographics (%)

<i>GENDER</i>	
Male	42.37%
Female	57.63%
<i>EDUCATIONAL LEVEL</i>	
Less than high school	49.04%
Did not go beyond high school	77.22%
<i>INCOME LEVEL (Per Year)</i>	
Less than \$10,000	40.86%
Less than \$15,000	53.42%
Less than \$25,000	73.29%
<i>AGE</i>	
19-59 Years Old	55.59%
60 Years Old & Above	44.41%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)

Socio-Economic Characteristics

- Almost 59% of Hawaii's LEP population is married, with 15.5% widowed, 15.4% never married or under 15 years old, and 10.2% either divorced or separated.
- Among Hawaii's LEP population, 85.6% are foreign-born.

Hawaii's LEP Population

- Foreign-born
 - Mostly Asian
 - Older
 - Female
 - Less educated
 - Low income
 - Married
- A very vulnerable or at-risk population

III. Hawaii's Language Access Law

- A product of more than 20 years of advocacy.
- Passed by the legislature and signed into law in 2006.
- Requires state agencies and covered entities to provide free oral language services (interpretation)
- Requires state agencies and covered entities to translate vital documents and provide free written language services (translation)
- Requires state agencies and covered entities to establish their language access plans
- Requires state agencies to hire qualified bilingual staff, if needed
- Established the Office of Language Access
- Established the Language Access Advisory Council

IV. The Office of Language Access

- Purpose: to provide oversight, central coordination, and technical assistance to state and state-funded agencies in their implementation of the requirements of the language access law.
 - serves as a resource for agencies, assists them in developing and implementing their plans, resolves complaints re compliance with the law.
- Started operations on April 25, 2007 with the appointment of its Executive Director. Fully staffed in August 2007.

What Has Been Done

(May 2007 to present)

- Operations
 1. Implemented a 6-month start-up plan
 2. Organized the Language Access Advisory Council
 3. Strategic Planning Process
- Education and Outreach
 1. Set up website (www.hawaii.gov/labor/ola)
 2. Produced multilingual poster and flyer for agencies
 3. Produced multilingual rack cards and PSAs on LEP rights
 4. Produced OLA Quarterly newsletter
 5. Distributed informational materials to members of legislature
 6. First Hawaii Language Access Conference

- Technical Assistance

1. Held 19 workshops statewide and developed resource materials on the language access law and on creating a language access plan.
2. Made individual presentations to state and non-profit agencies.
3. Initiated a bi-monthly meeting with state language access coordinators on language access plan implementation issues.
4. Developed reporting tool.

- Plan Submission and Enforcement
 1. Ensured state agencies met mandated deadlines for submission of initial language access plans; all 25 state agencies have submitted.
 2. Received language access plans from 40 covered entities on a voluntary basis.
 3. Established an LEP complaints procedure and developed complaints forms.

- Collaboration
 1. Work with the Interagency Council on Immigrant Services.
 2. Member of the services committee of the COFA Task Force.
 3. Worked with DBEDT on LEP demographic profile.
 4. Co-sponsored Oahu training for Micronesian interpreters with the Judiciary's OEAC.
 5. Co-sponsored the statewide training and certification workshops for court interpreters with the Judiciary's OEAC.

- Legislative Initiatives
 1. Legislation clarifying certain definitions in the language access law and expanding membership of the language access advisory council to include geographic and DCAB representation.
 2. Legislative resolution declaring September of each year as Language Access Month in Hawaii.
 3. Legislative resolution requesting OLA to conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of a statewide centralized language access resource center.

Strategic Planning

- Vision – Language access for all.
- Mission – To promote equal access to, and full participation in, government services, programs and activities, for persons with limited English proficiency through oversight, coordination, and assistance to state and state-funded agencies.

- Goals:
 1. To promote public awareness and ensure that the LEP population is informed and educated about their rights.
 2. To ensure that all state and state-funded agencies are in compliance with language access requirements.
 3. To assist in the development of an adequate pool of trained and competent language service professionals.

Goals:

4. To develop staff expertise and resources.
5. To ensure the just and timely resolution of complaints about language access.
6. To provide statewide leadership in the area of language access, including policymaking.

V. Challenges

- Need for more public awareness
- Compliance and enforcement
- Language access plan implementation issues
- Lack of fiscal resources for language services
- Lack of trained, competent interpreters and translators
- Uncoordinated language services

- need for capacity building
- structural lag; demand vs. supply
- need for standards

VI. Closing Thoughts

“O ka ‘olelo ke ola” – language is life.

OLA’s motto reflects the importance of language and how it serves as the life-line for people. It embodies the spirit of equality behind Hawaii’s language access laws and affirms that language should be a tool, not a barrier, to the pursuit of a better life.

“Laulima” – working together.

We, at OLA, look forward to collaborating and working with government agencies, the private sector, and the community to promote language access and make it the “norm” in Hawaii.

MAHALO

And

ALOHA